

## Research Article

## Perceived Quality of Work Life during COVID – 19 Outbreaks: A Psychological Study of L. N. Mithila University, India

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**Abstract:** The present study was undertaken to see the significance of difference between teaching and non – teaching employees in terms of their extent of Perceived Quality of Work Life during novel COVID – 19 outbreaks who are employed in different departments of L. N. Mithila University and its Constituent colleges located in Darbhanga, India. For this investigation, one hundred forty employees (N=140) comprising teaching (n=70) and non - teaching (n=70) were randomly selected by using mobile, WhatsApp, Google mail and other social media website. Having collected the data online through questionnaire schedules, the data were given statistical treatment, which indicated that there is significant difference between teaching and non – teaching employees working in different University Departments of L. N. Mithila University, Darbhanga and its constituent colleges, although both the group have indicated favorable inclination towards their Quality of Work Life. It is important to mention here that non – teaching employees didn't show any sign of higher degree of life satisfaction in comparison to their teaching counterparts, although, teaching group of employees were found more prone to their degree of Perceived Quality of Work Life during novel COVID – 19 pandemic. Finally, discrepancies of obtained results have been discussed in the light of exigency of situations prevailing now throughout the worlds.

**Keywords:** Quality of Work Life (QWL), COVID – 19, L. N. Mithila University, India.

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### INTRODUCTION

For most of the people around the world these days, the recent COVID-19 outbreak is a symbol of how breakable and changeable our lives can be in an unusual state of affairs. The virus which has changed the way in which most of us live, work or performs our basic day to day functions is continuing to increase its grab at an alarming rate with the impact being felt at multiple levels resulting in economic slowdown, business disruption, trade hindrances, travel obstructions, educational institution disruption in terms of teaching – learning processes, public isolation and so on.

With respect to the continuity of educational system in terms of teaching – learning processes in school, college and university as well around the world have switched over to online/virtual modes of working while global mobility has come to a fade away. In India, various states have been exposed to a situation of complete lockdown which has led employers to think over ahead how they can keep their people safe, contain the spread of the virus and continue their operations effectively during this exceptional crisis.

Since long, human beings are making all efforts to understand the behavior of people of the world of work and, today during the period of COVID – 19 outbreak transfer of knowledge to be well equipped for the promotion of different organizations including school, college and university as well. Thus, Quality of Work Life plays an important role in any organization. Basically, QWL is associated with human resources that cannot be overlooked at any stage of working life. It is fact that the activity of individual employees is greatly influenced by the elements of Quality of Work Life. People join organizations in their capacities to satisfy their economic, social and psychological needs. Hence, a good Quality of Work Life of any organization is of immense value in improving employees' working situations, their skills, attitudes and performance at large.

Quality of Work Life is a philosophy, a set of principles, which holds that people are the most important resource in the organization as they are trustworthy, responsible and capable of making valuable contribution on their respective organization,

so they should be treated with greater dignity and full respect (Straw *et al.*, 1984). The elements those are relevant to an individual's Quality of Work Life include the task, the physical work environment, social environment within the organization, administrative system and relationship between life on and off the job (Cunningham *et al.*, 1990). It is also important to mention that Quality of Work Life consists of opportunities for active involvement in group working arrangements or problem solving that are of mutual benefit to employees or employees which is directly based on employees management relationship. Employee also conceive of Quality of Work Life as a set of methods such as autonomous work groups, job enrichment, and high level job involvement aimed at boosting the satisfaction and productivity of workers (Feuer, 1989), whereas Walton(1975) said that it requires employee commitment to the organization and an environment in which this commitment can flourish.

The main objective of Quality of Work Life has been witnessed changing with the passage of time. It started with objective of improving wage and working conditions. And thereafter, other strategies like job enlargement and job enrichment emerged for improving employee's motivation and their efficiency. Employees are the backbone of any organization. So, a good Quality of Work Life is required during and after novel COVID – 19 outbreaks for a healthy mind and sound body, fair working methods, high efficiency of employees on one hand and production and profit on the other. As Shamir *et al.*, (1985) viewed Quality of Work Life as a comprehensive construct that includes an individual's job related well-being and the extent to which work experiences are rewarding, fulfilling and devoid of stress and other negative personal consequences.

In continuation to above mentioned text, it is necessary to point out that the term Quality of Work Life has different meanings to different people. Some level it as a happiness program, others especially trade unions name it as a subtle employee incentive or just another productivity device. These days, Quality of Work Life has assumed increasing interest and importance in both industrialized as well as developing countries of the world. In India, its scope seems broader than much labor legislation enacted to protect the workers. It is more than a sheer work organization movement which focuses on job security and economic growth to the employees. Thus, Quality of Work Life refers to the level of happiness or dissatisfaction with one's career. There who enjoy their careers are said to have a high Quality of Work Life, while those who are unhappy or whose needs are otherwise unfilled are said to have a low Quality of Work Life.

It is important to mention here that the term Quality of Work Life has been defined as 'better job and more balanced ways of combining work life with

personal life' (Eurofound, 2006). As the concept of Quality of Work Life is multidimensional, it may not of course, be universal. However, key concept tends to include job security, reward systems pay and opportunity for growth among other factors (Rossie *et al.*, 2006).

Recently, various studies on different aspects of psychology and its related variables viz., mental health, stress, anxiety, etc. during COVID – 19 pandemic conducted by Wang, *et al* (2020); Sahu P. (2020); and (Shigemura J. *et al* 2020), as they viewed that the current COVID – 19 outbreak has prompted most countries, hence, social distancing measures as a way to control the spread of the virus. However, the current pandemic has already shown significant psychological symptoms related to anxiety, stress and depression which affects quality of work life in particular throughout the world. Moreover, the development of new guidelines for counseling , psychological interventions online or those designed for specific groups such as health workers or older adults be identified for giving necessary measures in this situation (Bao *et al.*, 2020; Xiang *et al.*, 2020; Yang *et al.*, 2020).

#### ***Objective of the present study***

Having reviewed the literature on the phenomenon, it has been observed that Quality of Work Life of employees has been widely studied (Lawler, 1968; Seashore & Barnowe, 1972; Flangers *et al.*, 1974; Pierce and Danham, 1976; Davis, 1971; Bell, 1974; Jhonson, 1975) and is still has a greater focus on increasingly far more and more humanizing the job conditions as well as the total work environment from different angle. It is a matter of fact that the present era is considered as the novel COVID -19 pandemic era which is generally assumed as the era of stresses, fear, anxiety, depression, etc. Consequently, Quality of Work Life strategies are with the fast pace of technological development are dominating the work culture for enhancing individual working efficiency as well as organizational effectiveness. Thus, employee's Quality of Work Life seems to be highly important because satisfaction of employees is basically a back-bone for organizational survival and growth. Hence, by looking at the facts, the present piece of research work was aimed at studying the Perceived Quality of Work Life during COVID – 19 outbreaks among Teaching and Non – Teaching employees with special reference to L. N. Mithila University and its constituent colleges, India and still it is an unexplored area. Having surveyed the review of literature it has been observed that none of the studies are available on the phenomenon and has not been attempted during the novel COVID – 19 pandemic. Thus, the present study is of immense value and we are sure that the findings will fill the void of knowledge in the area concerned especially in the present situation of COVID – 19 pandemic.

#### ***Hypotheses***

On the basis of the broad objectives of the present study the following hypotheses were formulated:

- Teaching employees are likely to be more prone towards the degree of perceived life satisfaction during novel COVID – 19 outbreak than the group of non – teaching employees working in L. N. Mithila University, India
- There will be no significance of difference between the group of Teaching and Non – Teaching Employees working in L. N. Mithila University, India in terms of their perceived Quality of Work Life during novel COVID – 19 outbreaks.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample

In the present investigation sample consisted of one hundred forty (N=140) employees comprising teaching (n=70) and Non – teaching (n=70, were contacted on mobile, WhatsApp, Google mail and they were asked to fill the questionnaire schedule. Having received the consent from all employees of L. N. Mithila University, Darbhanga the online questionnaire were sent to them. All the respondents were also assured that responses given by them on the items of the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. Total subjects’ age were ranged between 35 – 62 years

### Tools Used

#### Following tools were used for the collection of data:

- **Quality of Work Life:** For measuring Quality of Work Life (QWL), a scale developed by Shawkat and Ansari (2001) was administered individually to each respondent of the sample. The QWL scale assess overall numerous dimensions such as work itself, employees’ participation, physical

working conditions, Union-management relations, Organizational commitment, supervisory relations, clarity at organization, recognition, economic benefits, self-respect, employee health and Promotion. The scale consisted of 48 items and each item was rated on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1-5). High score indicates low level of Quality of Work Life. The split-half reliability coefficient was found to be  $r=.70$  which is highly significant which confirms the efficiency of the scale.

- **Biographical Information Blank (BIB):** For interpreting the obtained results a biographical information blank was prepared. It includes qualification, age, marital status, religion, sex, number of dependents, experience in the present position, salary and family income etc.

### Procedure

Above-mentioned two materials in printed form were administered online by using WhatsApp and Google mail individually during COVID – 19 outbreaks on the sample to obtain the data. Subjects were also assured that the information provided by them on each items of the scale will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

Having obtained the data on each of the items of the quality of work life questionnaire, the data were tabulated according to norms and procedures for giving statistical treatment to test the hypothesis formulated. Finally the obtained results were presented in the tables and discussed logically to draw the conclusions.

## RESULTS

**Table: 1** Showing Comparative Levels of Perceived Quality of Work Life Between Teaching and Non – Teaching Employees of L. N. Mithila University, Darbhanga, India

Levels	Teaching Employees		Non – Teaching Employees	
	n=70	Percentage	n=70	Percentage
High	38	54.28 %	25	35.71 %
Moderate	23	32.86 %	21	30.00 %
Low	09	12.86 %	24	34.29 %

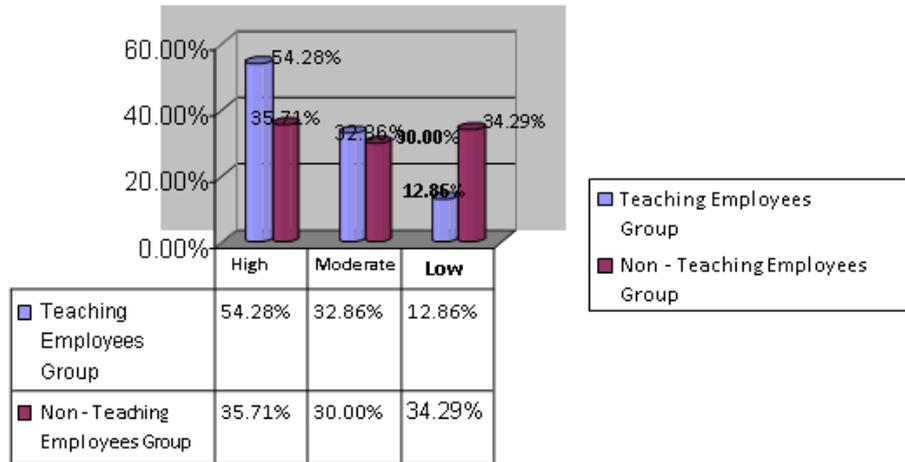
Table 1 highlights the percentages of teaching and non – teaching employees’ reactions to the perception of Quality of Work Life working during COVID – 19 outbreak in L. N. Mithila University, India. It is evident from the table - 1 that 54.28 percent of the non – teaching employees have shown higher degree of perceived Quality of Work Life in comparison to non – teaching group of L. N. Mithila University who reported only 35.71 percent while 32.86 percent of teaching employees working in L. N. Mithila University have shown moderate level of perceived reactions to Quality of Work Life, 30.00 percent of non

– teaching group of employees had shown moderate level of Quality of Work Life which is comparatively low when compared to teaching employees i.e. 32.86 percent. Moreover, 34.29 percent of non – teaching employees working in L. N. Mithila University, India had indicated low level of perceived Quality of Work Life in comparison to teaching employees i.e. 12.86 percent which is comparatively lower degree of Quality of Work Life as the Mean value of teaching employees group ( $x=156.67$ ) is more higher than that of the non – teaching group i.e.  $x=143.64$ . Hence, the proposed hypothesis i.e. teaching employees group are likely to

be more prone towards perceived Quality of Work Life than non – teaching employees group during COVID –

19 outbreaks, stands accepted. The results presented above can also be observed by the following diagram:

**Chart Showing Comparative Levels of Perceived Quality of Work Life between the Group of Teaching and Non - Teaching Employees of L. N. Mithila University During COVID - 19 Outbreaks**



**Table: 2** showing significance of difference between Teaching and Non – Teaching Employees on their Degree of Perceived Reactions towards Quality of Work Life During COVID – 19 Outbreak

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t	p
Teaching Employees	70	156.67	23.73	3.53*	0.01
Non – Teaching Employees	70	143.64	19.47		

\* Indicates significant at 0.01 level

Table-2 reveals the clear cut picture regarding the significance of difference between the group of teaching and non - teaching on their degree of perceived Quality of Work Life as t-value 3.53 has been found highly significant statistically at 0.01 level of confidence. Hence the proposed hypothesis that there will be no significance of difference during COVID – 19 outbreaks between the group of teaching and non - teaching employees working in L. N. Mithila University and its constituent colleges stands rejected.

Aforementioned results have shown those teaching employees group are comparatively more prone to higher degree of Quality of Work Life than their supportive staffs i.e. non - teaching group especially from where the present sample has been drawn for the present piece of research work during COVID – 19 outbreaks.

## DISCUSSION

In the light of the results obtained it is imperative to point out that all the staffs either teaching or non - teaching have shown quite favorable reactions towards their Quality of Work Life during COVID – 19

outbreaks. This is evident from the results obtained that they scored higher (above average score) on the Quality of Work Life scale.

The results as given in table-2 indicated that the teaching employees’ Mean score is 156.67 with an S.D. of 23.73. This information clearly shows that the teaching employees have significantly higher degree of Quality of Work as compared to supportive staff i.e. non – teaching group especially from where the present sample has been drawn. The difference between teaching and non – teaching working in L. N. Mithila university and its constituent colleges seem to be quite logical as socio-cultural living pattern of Teaching employees group of L. N. Mithila University is being observed as modernized according to needs and demands of fast changing society even in the time of COVID – 19 outbreaks which is, at present, based on info-tech, every teaching – learning is going online as well to meet the demands and to cater needs of the students and other staffs also, the teaching group of L. N. Mithila University continue to work from home in addition to heir prime jobs as reported by teaching group during investigation. Hence, teaching group have

shown higher degree of satisfaction with their work than their supportive staffs i.e. non - teaching group. They really deserve a lot of credit especially during COVID – 19 outbreaks. Their services for the promotion of healthy society and nation at large can not be overlooked.

Discussing the results obtained the non – teaching group of L. N. Mithila University and its constituent colleges, it is imperative to point out that this group of employees has shown positive but above moderate level of inclination towards perceived Quality of Work Life than their teaching group which can be observed from the table- 1&2. In obtaining such a discrepancy of results, it is important to throw light some of the observation, experienced by the present investigators, that is, lack of organizational resources such as delay in salary, inadequate amount of salary, political uncertainty prevailing in the university regarding policies, lack of proper care and cooperation from the authority in general and state government in particular and lack of other benefits, etc. there are basic reasons as have been observed during novel COVID – 19 outbreaks, by which non - teaching group especially in L. N. Mithila University, India are more effected as they reported that they feel lack of social support and unhappiness of their family members due to inevitable delay in payment, although, they are ready to contribute a lot to the betterment of hygienic society even in the times of COVID – 19 outbreaks.

In addition to the above context, it is important to mention here that there are various types of non – teaching employees who are working in different position to cater the \needs of the institutions but in absence of a nature of all the other categories of non – teaching employees who work from outside their homes, their jobs are at risk during the COVID – 19 pandemic. Basically, they needs specialized training that how to perform their job successfully especially during novel OVID – 19 pandemic. To attain this sense of achievement they willingly sacrifice leisure, family life, love and that comfortable social preservative, the conventions in the time of COVID – 19 outbreaks. Hence, it seems, non - teaching group reported positive reactions towards perceived Quality of Work Life especially from where the sample has been drawn.

## CONCLUSION

**The important conclusions are summed up below:**

- Teaching and non – teaching employees working in L. N. Mithila University, India have been found favorable inclination towards Quality of Work Life during novel COVID – 19 outbreaks.
- Significance of difference has been found between teaching and non – teaching group of employees working in L. N. Mithila University and its constituent colleges in terms of their perceived

reactions on quality of work life during COVID – 19 outbreaks.

- Teaching group of L. N. Mithila University were found comparatively more prone to higher degree of Quality of Work Life than non – teaching group of employees.
- Observations have revealed the fact that there is need to pay much more attention to the necessities of the non - teaching employees group in particular and other employees in general such as adequate amount of salary, well-furnished sanitized housing facilities, proper care and cooperation from concerned authorities and other perks and benefits as provided to the central government employees. This is only the way by which positive work ethics and greater sense of commitment of L. N. Mithila university employees especially during and after the period of COVID – 19 outbreaks can be maintained without having any feeling of shyness, inferiority and sense of loosing esteem needs, etc.
- Apart from above mentioned context it is important to point out that following the necessary precautions and bringing in basic health measures at the workplace and outside the workplace during and after COVID – 19 outbreaks such as proper sanitization & deep cleaning of all areas, etc. is an imperative during the present times and everyone should make it a part of their effort towards safeguarding the health & safety for all.
- Obviously, these are challenging times for all of us but the one thing we know is that our best response relies on global empathy, cooperation and communities building that sit at the heart of our movement. Since highly engaged employees and a productive workforce is a critical need of the moment, it is supreme to make talent a top most priority and move the needle by implementing strategies and initiatives that benefit society by supporting their employees (teaching & non – teaching), and students at large.

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